



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
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September 3, 2013

Congressman Doc Hastings  
Chairman  
Natural Resources Committee  
United States House, Washington DC

Congressman Peter Defazio  
Ranking Member  
Natural Resources Committee  
United States House, Washington DC

Dear Congressman Hastings and Defazio:

A phrase such as "money does not grow on trees" is quite often overused. However, in America's national forests money and jobs do grow on trees. Unfortunately, a failed federal forest management system has led to the loss of thousands of family wage jobs and has left rural forested counties with a myriad of social and economic problems we do not deserve and need to be addressed. For most of our counties, that can only be done by returning to a sustainable harvest level that will provide family wage jobs and allow for a solid tax base to support badly needed services.

From our perspective there are at least three recurring themes hindering sustainable forest management. First, funding to prepare sales; second, environmental analysis and review time for management activities; third, litigation that stalls or totally stops much of the harvest that needs to be done.

Sustainable forest management is essential if we are to provide the healthy forests that were envisioned by President Theodore Roosevelt. The National Forest mortality we are facing is destroying habitat for wildlife, creating a catastrophic situation for massive wildfires that destroy everything in their path and leaving millions of acres of forests susceptible to massive bug and insect infestation.

H.R 1526 addresses all of these issues. It provides a common sense approach for returning to sustainable forest management where the planned harvest can occur in a reasonable amount of time. We do appreciate that legislation allows for a temporary extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act. However, for the long term social and financial health of rural forest communities we must have the family wage jobs that are provided by a healthy forest products industry. We will fully support H.R. 1526 when it comes to the House floor and will certainly contact our House members to speak in support and vote for the bill.

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